

THE ARTS AND  
CULTURE IN  
SAN DIEGO

*Celebrating the Past...Shaping the Future*





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In conjunction with its 75th Anniversary, the San Diego Museum of Art joined with the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture and arts and culture organizations of the San Diego region in a process of shared thought that struck a collaborative course for the future while celebrating 75 years of artistic life in San Diego.



*The Full Monty*, The Globe Theatres, photo by Craig Schwartz

# THE ARTS AND CULTURE IN SAN DIEGO

## *Celebrating the Past...Shaping the Future*

On Friday, March 2, 2001,

*How Do We Help San Diego*

*Mature As a Cultural Capital?*,

a symposium exclusively for artists,

arts and cultural professionals,

volunteer councils, and their

governing boards, convened in

a shared thinking process

focused on where San Diego is

going as an arts and culture

community over the next 25 years.

The text contained herein is

the transcript from the forum

panelists' presentations in which

they defined common positions,

identified burning issues for further

exploration, and addressed the

collective future and the spirit of

collaboration that builds and binds

together the arts and culture

community of San Diego.





The forum was graciously  
supported by U.S. Bank,  
Rudolph and Sletten,  
the Prado Restaurant in Balboa Park,  
the City of San Diego Commission  
for Arts and Culture and the  
San Diego Museum of Art.



*“Forums like this give us an opportunity to hold a mirror up to ourselves, to address our shortcomings and to work together to transform our destiny. Today our goal is to engage you in new thinking and together embrace a vision for the future. Senior Advisor to the Irvine Foundation Cora Mirikitani said, “If you pull the lens back, San Diego is on the verge of declaring itself an international cultural city. It has the institutions and the leadership.”*

*Indeed. And we have the talent and strength of our collaboration to make this happen.”*

VICTORIA L. HAMILTON  
Executive Director, City of San Diego  
Commission for Arts and Culture

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HOW DO WE HELP SAN DIEGO MATURE AS A CULTURAL CAPITOL?

## Opening Comments

LOUISE K. STEVENS

President and Founder, ArtsMarket Inc.

Our contributors here today will help us shape the beginnings of what might be a shared vision for the next 25 years of San Diego's cultural development. What will define San Diego as a cultural capitol in 25 years? As a planner, I follow that wonderful Steven Covey line - "begin with the end in mind." I find that if we do that and then take a look at our shortcomings and our assets, we will find we can do much to build on our strengths and overcome those shortfalls.

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Just what is a cultural capitol? There are perhaps four ingredients that go into shaping a vision for a city as becoming a cultural capitol. First it must be a city where arts and culture are central to shared civic life and infrastructure. For much of the development of San Diego during the 20th century, arts and culture were absolutely central to civic life. Now, in this changed world - our virtual reality world - how will arts and culture be central to shared civic life? How is it going to be central to infrastructure, to all decision-making - not just to cultural planning, but to civic planning, human services planning, healthcare, education and a broad economic base?

The second element of a cultural capitol is that its arts and cultural institutions are vital and dynamic. Community use

### *Just what is a cultural capitol?*

- *First it must be a city where arts and culture are central to shared civic life and infrastructure.*
- *Its arts and cultural institutions are vital and dynamic.*
- *Its culture is truly capitalized to support its growth so it can serve and do more.*
- *And finally, a cultural capitol develops where there is a shared vision, shared goals and teamwork toward a destination within and beyond the cultural field.*



of and participation in those institutions is equally vital and dynamic. It is a two-sided phenomenon. You can't just have financially healthy institutions, you need dynamic institutions, made so by equally dynamic community involvement and participation. We know that we are going through this period of unprecedented change in the way we consume - if you will - cultural institutions. I can as easily open up my notebook computer and find out what is happening at the new Tate, and take a look at a virtual museum anywhere in the world, as I can go to Balboa Park. Our world has already changed so much and will continue to change so much more in 25 years. How do we plan now for the public to relate to our cultural institutions?

The third element of a cultural capitol is that its culture is truly capitalized to support its growth so it can serve and do more. The concept of venture capital is something frequently discussed by foundations. What does it mean to build cultural capital? It means going beyond the concept of an endowment and a secure financial base, though certainly that is essential. It means money to invest in changes needed throughout cultural institutions at a greater level than has been seen in perhaps a half a century. It means money to keep up with and ideally anticipate changes in community needs.

And finally, a cultural capitol develops where there is a shared vision, shared goals and teamwork toward a destination within and beyond the cultural field. A cultural capitol develops where that

team includes partnerships with economic development, education, community services, private sector and public sector entities, non-profit and for-profit organizations, those directly affiliated with culture and those not so directly affiliated. Where all, together, recognize the impact of this incredible asset of culture. This is a tall order. It doesn't happen overnight. But discussions like this are essential in starting the process.

Dialogue on cultural strengths and needs, and a willingness to assess where things truly stand and where they should develop, is the start of shaping a vision. We really need to use the term cultural development planning as we begin this process, because we are talking about using our culture to develop our communities and at the same time developing what we do to better serve the community. It is an exciting process of acknowledging needs, seeing strengths and needs, and going through a change process.

As you envision cultural development goals for the next 25 years, ask, "What can each of your institutions do differently?" They say there are distinct steps in the change process. The first is anger: "How could you possibly ask us to change?" The second is denial: "Things are just fine the way they are." The third is really coming to grips with new thinking - a realignment. And then, finally, we line ourselves up for change.

This is what needs to happen in planning for cultural development for San Diego.



*Stomp*, presented by Broadway/San Diego, photo by Junichi Takahashi

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We know there are many changes that have hit all cultural capitals and virtually all of our civic cultural life. Some sweeping generalizations:

1) The booster era is over. We need to create a new, vibrant cultural development booster era. Nationwide, we had a huge flowering of civic support that built, rebuilt, and added to the cultural vitality in nearly every American city. It started post-World War II, peaked in the 1970s and remained on hold through the 1980s. And then we went through a decade of enormous change in the way we fund, appreciate and participate in our cultural institutions. What will replace that boosterism? Will we simply allow it to be replaced with consumerism, or will we be able to create a new movement of civic cultural pride?

2) Art is its own needy part of the non-profit world, deserving of its own support for its own sake. That was once a reality. But as we look at this idea of cultural development, we are implicitly saying that art is not its own needy niche but is dynamically linked to every community development opportunity and need. It not only has a seat at the table but is coming up with solutions that work. And because art is at the table, rather than being something that only a small segment of our community actively engages in, it is something that is at the heart of civil society, that everyone is proud to share, and that actively contributes to virtually every aspect of community life.

3) There is insecurity about personal participation in arts and culture that we hear often in audience development research. We call them the statements at the water cooler. When co-workers or friends ask, "Do you go to the symphony, opera or theater?" people will say, "Oh no, not me! That's somebody else." Do I really want to be known as an arts participant? Do I want my neighbors to know that I'd rather go to the arts than anything else? That I really love culture? How do I talk about that thing called culture to my neighbor? And if somebody asks you what you do for your job, your work, how do you define it? As being in a field and a job that is essential to San Diego's present and future life?

So in response to these conditions, how will San Diego address the challenges and opportunities ahead? How will it deal with the changes? Are we going to become 24/7 institutions? Are we

going to change our sense of access and participation, not only to deal with the needs of our community, but of our wired world?

These are just a few of the questions that quickly surface whenever one starts to think about building and expanding upon a city's cultural assets to truly make it a cultural capital. Sorting out the answers takes time, opportunity for extensive dialogue, shared vision and collaborative strategies.

As a starting point, several San Diego cultural and civic leaders have contributed their thoughts organized around four touchstone cultural planning topics: quality, audience development, community development and resource development. All have offered reflections of strengths and needs, priorities and important pathways for cultural development.

#### **LOUISE K. STEVENS**

Louise K. Stevens, President and Executive Consultant, is the founder of ArtsMarket Inc. Since starting the company in 1982, Stevens has provided decision-oriented counsel and research to hundreds of organizations, corporations and agencies throughout the United States. The firm has developed a national reputation for work in strategic planning, research, cultural education and building audiences.

Stevens' consulting expertise encompasses audience/funder research design and target market development, stabilization, strategic and cultural development planning, organizational planning and evaluation. She is also widely called upon for her work in education planning and evaluation.

HOW DO WE HELP SAN DIEGO MATURE AS A CULTURAL CAPITOL?

## Quality is Job One

HUGH M. DAVIES

The David C. Copley Director,  
Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego

Quality is job one. Quality is synonymous with excellence, without peer, simply the number one. It is an absolute standard rather than a relative term. The phrase "pretty good for San Diego" makes me absolutely crazy. And I hear it far too often. We definitely have to hold our institutions and ourselves to a standard that is national and international rather than to this kind of regional, relative quality that kind of condemns us to mediocrity. Either we are the best or we aren't. We have to set the bar high, which is something, that for too many years, we haven't done.

There are too many cultural institutions in this city that have settled for less than top quality, with the excuse that the audience is not ready for it. That if we raise the bar too high we will lose them, that the audience doesn't want to work that hard. That attitude has sold our institutions short and has also - equally importantly - sold our audiences short. In that regard, the single most important action in this city was the acquisition of the Jusepe de Ribera for which I congratulate Don Bacigalupi. He has set an incredibly high standard in terms of art, in terms of acquisition, and in giving notice to the city that the San Diego Museum of Art is about excellence. That's the way it should be.

When did the change occur - setting the bar higher? Probably the most significant event was the establishment of the University of California, San Diego. The Scripps Institution of Oceanography has been world class from day one and the rest of the campus has had that standard to live up to. The Zoo claims it is world famous and we have no reason not to believe it. A company that has changed standards the most in this community is Qualcomm, and it is no accident that Qualcomm stands for quality communications - the perfect name. They are a true Fortune 500 company led by an extraordinarily learned and culturally informed and generous founder, Irwin Jacobs. This is truly a gift from heaven to have somebody of that caliber succeed in our city and raise the standards in every area, including culturally.

In our cultural institutions we have occasionally witnessed what I could call individual excellence, but rarely institutional excellence. In terms of individual excellence, *Model Wife*,

the show that Arthur Ollman put together for the Museum of Photographic Arts is an example of the very best. That show is currently at the Art Institute of Chicago, and it gives me enormous pride to know that we, San Diego, have produced that show. Liz Armstrong created the *Ultrabaroque* show for the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego that is currently at the Fort Worth Museum. That show is traveling to the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Walker Art Center, the Miami Art Museum and the Art Gallery of Ontario. I am enormously proud that we have generated an exhibition with a very strong scholarly publication that is going to the leading institutions in the country.

er to admit they went to a cultural event. I don't think that's true any more. I think there is now a culturally sophisticated audience that cries out for excellence. They don't want to settle for mediocre. They want the best of every form of art, whether it is exhibitions, or theater or the performing arts. It is to our peril if we don't program at the highest level because we will lose that audience.

They are a very mobile audience. They travel. They go to San Francisco and New York. We have an obligation to catch up with our audience because they are about to outstrip us in their expectations of quality.

*I think there is now a culturally sophisticated audience that cries out for excellence. They don't want to settle for mediocre. They want the best of every form of art, whether it is exhibitions, or theater or the performing arts. It is to our peril if we don't program at the highest level because we will lose that audience.*

The bar is very high in that regard. I know very little about the performing arts, but I am told by those that do know that the recent production of *The Magic Flute* at the San Diego Opera set the standard. It is a travesty that critics from New York weren't out here to see that show.

I am convinced there is a new population in this city, and that our perception and the reality are not in sync. For too long the perception has been that we are an ill-educated, military town that doesn't appreciate culture. That people are embarrassed at the water cool-

We have an extraordinarily strong Commission for Arts and Culture in this community. If we have one institution that has ensured the stability of arts and cultural institutions in this city, and that has grown the funding for arts and culture from the City government, it is the Commission for Arts and Culture. But I find it amazing that the Commission doesn't put more of an emphasis on artistic quality as the single major criterion for judging artistic institutions. It is very important to quantify all the other factors of diversity and of audience and sources of funding. But to fail to have a strong emphasis on quality may hamper

our ability to reach the level to which we aspire. At my institution, when we get a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts or a ranking from the California Arts Council, it is especially sweet and meaningful because this is the result of peer review - the best in our field nationally and statewide are evaluating our accomplishments. When they find us deserving, it is more than about the money, it is about having that approval, that imprimatur, that is important. I would hope that as our Commission evolves in the coming years, they would consider the concept of peer review. Get the professionals involved in that very important deliberation. Bring in peers from other cities. By raising the bar in that way, by putting quality as the major standard, the scrutiny helps us all grow and we can't hide behind the 'its pretty good for San Diego' rubric.

Finally, to be appropriately philosophical, I've had this theory that culture follows money. If you go back to Rome and Paris, to New York, and now to San Diego, you can see that power and wealth - or so I thought - preceded culture. I really didn't understand it. I now see that they are intertwined. You can't have one without the other. A strong business community needs a strong cultural community - they nurture each other and build upon each other. A recent good example of this is Bilbao, Spain, where the Guggenheim Museum has transformed a city that was down on its luck, an industrial shipbuilding city that had lost its economic base and was floundering with 40 percent unemployment. They took an incredible

gamble by investing in an art museum. And it has turned to very good advantage. Tourism is up; the museum has more than paid for itself. The Deputy Mayor of Bilbao said in a speech very recently that, "In the 21st century all economically successful cities will also all be culturally significant." The change in my thinking is these have to go hand-in-hand. I have a dream that Tijuana, Mexico would have a great contemporary art museum of its own, almost like Bilbao. I can't think of a greater institution or event that could transform that city's self esteem more than generating a museum of contemporary art. Our greatest opportunity in this region is across the border. Mike Hagar of the Natural History Museum is taking advantage of this extraordinary opportunity. It is a God-given opportunity to be perched on this international border, drawing on the resources of two very rich and deep cultures. We should aspire to use that combination to build quality and excellence.

#### HUGH M. DAVIES

In 1983, Hugh M. Davies was appointed Director of what was then called the La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art. He is now The David C. Copley Director of the renamed Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego. Davies received his A.B. (1970), M.F.A. (1972), and Ph.D. (1976) from the Department of Art and Archaeology at Princeton University. His dissertation on British painter Francis Bacon was later expanded and published by Garland Press; he also co-authored another volume on Bacon, published by Abbeville Press. Davies has written or contributed to numerous books and exhibition catalogues over the years and is recognized internationally as a scholar in the field of contemporary and modern art.



*Men Seldom Make Passes At Girls Who Wear Glasses, Alexis Smith, Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego*

HOW DO WE HELP SAN DIEGO MATURE AS A CULTURAL CAPITOL?

## *Quality Institutions, Quality Art*

IAN D. CAMPBELL

General Director, San Diego Opera Association

There is no question that quality is what we should all be about, and it is very easy to say that we deliver quality now. The fact is many of us don't. And what we have to do is look very seriously at the quality of what we put on our stages, in our galleries. Probably even more importantly, we have to look at the quality of our management. Are we running our institutions in a way that gives them a chance to survive for the next 25 years? We should all be very critical of the quality of our performance not only as artistic directors but also as administrators.

There are many of us who run small organizations, who say "The big ones have it so easy. They have all the staff, all the money, and we don't have anything, so you can't make demands on us." That's mistake number one. If you are running a small institution, you have to make demands if you are ever to become a large institution. Every large institution in this city was once a small one. All of us in arts administration at one time or another stood in the street handing out flyers promoting our institutions. I did that when I was running a small opera company in Australia.

Do we do that enough today? Or do we say we're owed. That this is a big city - we need an opera company, we

must have a symphony, we must have a great art museum. Maybe there are no "must haves." Maybe the reality is we have to work hard to have these things and we have to look at ourselves a little bit more and ask, "Are we doing it the right way?" Are we, as heads of organizations, training downwards? Are we encouraging all of our staff to do their best, go the extra mile, sell the extra ticket, and make the extra contact? Can we do that a little bit more to make the institution a quality institution that people in turn want to invest in so it can do quality art?

We all say San Diego's not a head office town, that we're owed money, that we could be supported more by Mr. and Mrs. Smith or by Qualcomm. But these are people who know how to invest in what is going to work. Qualcomm sells off departments that don't work, that aren't successful. Yet we in the arts think that if we are the Underwater Hindu Flute Players, we are owed a living. That we should get City funding. That we should be given



money, because after all what we do is so terrific, and underwater Hindu flute playing is a dying art - very few people do it more than once. But we have got to keep it alive somehow, so fund us.

I suggest we need to look more and more at the quality of our institutions. Are we as heads of our institutions educating our staff as to what our business is about? All of you have access to the Internet. Do you read what is happening in similar institutions around the world? Do you do your darndest to help staff understand management functions? Do you meet to understand how you deal with clients - your donors, ticket-buyers, the people who use your services? I suggest that if we all do that a little bit more, we will have a huge opportunity in this city.

I look around here and see many faces I haven't seen before. Young faces, wanting to get involved in this business. Don't ever forget that art is a business. People ask me what is San Diego Opera? And I say we are a downtown business whose product happens to be opera. As such, we are a part of that broader community. No different from it. No one owes us a favor. We have to earn our support. How many of us are members of the Rotary, the Lions Club? How many sit on committees of the Convention and Visitors Bureau (ConVis), the Chamber of Commerce, or other arts or non-profit boards? I think if we look carefully, we will find we are not doing that enough. If we are to be a part of this community, we need to get out into all those networking areas and be seen as a prominent part of

business and life, so that the people we mix with know who we are and what we are about. It will give you chances to talk about artistic quality from the point of view of a well-run organization in a dynamic city.

I think 25 years from now, we should all be here, but some of us will not - some of our institutions will have fallen by the wayside, and it may be that we didn't make the decision today that we're going to survive, that we are not owed a living, and that we have to earn it.

I would like to see in this city some arts administration training - I know UCSD is starting to think about it. We should be sending our staff, at our cost, to part-time courses to understand better what we need to do with marketing, development, interaction within the broader community. Most of us are not trained in arts administration. Probably between all of us here there are two or three degrees that are even suitable for arts administration. Most of us have learned it on the job. And what we need to do is train our staff better than we were trained, because it is going to get more complex. It is a tougher world.

There is greater competition for the entertainment dollar, the discretionary



dollar. The old walk through Balboa Park no longer guarantees that you walk into the museum. It used to. It used to be that we had so little to do we'd go walk in the Park and visit every museum. We don't do that in the same way anymore. We're more selective. We get attracted by certain events, because everything is promoted as a big event.

Another problem is that most of us do not have press support that backs quality. It's not that the press doesn't write about us - they do. It's not that they don't review our shows, our exhibits: they do. Until we have media in town that is critical of what we do from a per-

ConVis, and spread the word that we know what quality is and we are delivering it here within the resources we have available. And that's not a cultural cringe, that's not a whine, that's not a moan. That is, "We're damned good," and if you want to know how good we are, go and have a look at what is happening throughout Europe. Go look at some of the art museums in Germany that are static and old fashioned and

*We are all still pioneers, all of us, in this city. We can't sit back and say we're owed, we're there, we've arrived. We've only just started the journey. You have a role to play: be a professional. Review what you do. And always know it is never good enough. Take the next step, keep educating yourself. Keep reading about the field, and share it with your staff. Get them excited, so that we all move forward together, and over the next 25 years, we will show everyone in this city that we have arts to be proud of.*

spective of reality, we will not be able to show the public just how good our work is. I would love to see our press study more. Until we get a knowledgeable press that understands our goals and achievements, it will be very difficult to convince the broader public. That's why we have to work as much as we can outside the press - why we have to join that Rotary Club, that parent-teacher association, that committee at

out-of-date and haven't hung new paintings since Hitler left town. But our critics think that if it isn't from San Diego it must be better. I don't mean to make a wide attack on the press, it is simply that they are not working hard enough either. Just as we have to keep developing our own knowledge, so do they.

Don't lose sight of the goal. Aim for the highest standard. Ignore the press when

they say you aren't as good as some little tin pot group somewhere. Keep the high standard. Make your staff work at a high standard. Get out into the community and talk about why you matter and recognize you are part of a 25-year program. Twenty-five years from now, we will be where we need to be. None of us is going to achieve it in our lifetime. We are all still pioneers, all of us, in this city. We can't sit back and say we're owed, we're there, we've arrived. We've only just started the journey. You have a role to play: be a professional. Review what you do. And always know it is never good enough. Take the next step, keep educating yourself. Keep reading about the field, and share it with your staff. Get them excited, so that we all move forward together, and over the next 25 years, we will show everyone in this city that we have arts to be proud of. We will keep attracting business, and business will keep supporting us. We will grow, and who knows, the Underwater Hindu Flute Players may even get their chance.



*Lohengrin*, San Diego Opera, photo by Ken Howard

#### IAN D. CAMPBELL

Ian Campbell, the General Director of San Diego Opera Association since 1983, is a graduate of the University of Sydney and a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management. Campbell began his operatic career in 1967 as a principal character tenor with the Australian Opera and sang until 1974. He then moved into management as Senior Music Officer for the Australia Council from 1974 to 1976 and was General Manager of The State Opera of South Australia in Adelaide from 1976 to 1982. In 1982 he joined the Metropolitan Opera in New York as Assistant Artistic Administrator. Campbell is currently Chairman of OPERA America.

HOW DO WE HELP SAN DIEGO MATURE AS A CULTURAL CAPITOL?

## *Audience Development: Making Every Event the Best Ever*

ERIKA TORRI

Executive Director, Athenaeum Music and Arts Library

I represent one of the smaller institutions here. But I also represent the oldest institution here. We were founded in 1899 as a member of the library, and we have been in constant pursuit of that audience ever since. We have a 102-year history of looking for audience members. And it has not always been an easy task. We had several occurrences in the 30s and 40s, and again in the 70s, where we were in dire need of either money or members and almost didn't make it. But as you can see we did survive. And over the last ten years have turned into a cultural institution that embraces much more than a music and arts library. We are serving our members through our arts school, and present 50 concerts of various types. We offer a summer festival where we explore the work of a single composer in considerable depth.

Today we have twice as many members as we had ten years ago. We have 2,200 members. Our budget has increased by a factor of five. We serve about 100,000 people a year, which is of

course much smaller than what many others (larger institutions) are doing, but we are up to capacity at this point.

Here are some basics to note in talking about audience development: Audience, according to the Random House Dictionary, is a group of the general public that manifests support and interest and enthusiasm for what you are doing. At a recent Director's Forum, presented by the American Federation of the Arts, one of the mutual understandings at the end of the day was that, in order to attract an audience today, it is not so much a question of entertainment versus education, but the blending of the two to create truly enriching and engaging experiences. That entertainment and education can co-exist without compromising integrity; that new ideas and a new style of thinking need to be introduced, and are in many instances already transforming many of our institutions; and that art institutions can successfully compete for an audience by pairing education and entertainment, and by utilizing the avail-

able collections, presentations and performances, and adding a solid base of scholarship. I think that is the most important part here. Since we are cultural institutions, the scholarship is important.

Different age groups like different art works - of course, that is nothing new. What is interesting is that the middle age group attends more arts than any other group, and I am living proof of that. Most important: the Baby Boomers and Generation Xers are not that interested in live performances. They are interested in popular music and they look to an alternative forum. They are interested in TV, in radio and in recorded materials. We see that at the Athenaeum: we have lots of different audiences, but they don't intermingle. We have people who use the recording library, but they don't come to chamber concerts.

Let's turn to education in the arts. Of course, we all know that the higher the education and the higher the income, the more arts participation will be present. But to differentiate between education in general and arts educations: people who are exposed to the arts more through education, attend more arts. And that shows how important it is to continue our education programs in the schools and with outreach programs. That is of great importance for the future.

Twelve years ago, when I came on at the Athenaeum, we were a dormant institution that was losing audience

members. We have learned a lot in rebuilding our audience and becoming an institution with capacity audiences. Here are some key elements we have learned:

- 1) Find your niche and perfect it. If you have a presentation that brings a wonderful audience, specialize. Don't try to reach to broad an audience. You cannot be everything to everybody.
- 2) Deliver value. And always set out to produce the best event ever. It is more important to present a few fabulous concerts than to dilute and present mediocre ones. Larger and more is not necessarily better.

■ *Find your niche and perfect it.*

■ *Deliver value.*

■ *Mix the old and familiar with the new and progressive. Know as much as possible about the interests, backgrounds and abilities of your audiences, so you can cater to their needs to the fullest.*

■ *Instill a sense of ownership and pride in your members, audience and followers.*

■ *Collaborate with your fellow institutions.*

■ *Have passion for your institution.*

■ *Enjoy what you are doing.*

3) Mix the old and familiar with the new and progressive. Remember the Girl Scout saying: "Make new friends and keep the old, one is silver and the other gold." Don't change what works well and brings in a great audience and is successful. This builds return customers, and people like to feel it is something familiar they can count on. But be prepared to add exciting new programming to attract a new audience. Don't project yourself as stale and old-fashioned.

4) Know as much as possible about the interests, backgrounds and abilities of your audiences, so you can cater to their needs to the fullest. This is very important to us as a membership organization at the Athenaeum. We do feel that we are still like the green grocer, and give our members the feeling that we are the grocer at the corner store. We have 2,200 members, but we try to make every single member feel like they are special people and that we know everything about them.

5) Instill a sense of ownership and pride in your members, audience and followers. Build up a feeling of participation and belonging. Make them part of the institution and its successes. So when audience members leave, they say, "this was 'our' best concert ever." It is important they feel a part of the institution and have had a small part in its success.

6) Collaborate with your fellow institutions. Don't be afraid or look at other cultural institutions as enemies or com-

petitors. Try to collaborate. Being a small institution, it was very easy to ask of others: I think it is more difficult for larger institutions. I needed a lot of help. We have collaborated with many institutions in town, and that has been very important to us.

7) Most importantly, have passion for your institution. Instill passion in your staff and your volunteers. If you don't have it, who should? If all of you feel that way about your institution, this will filter into the community and bring in a following.

8) You have to enjoy what you are doing. If you don't, then you might not be at the right place. Above all, you as the arts administrator or the leader of your organization really have to believe in what you are doing.

#### **ERIKA TORRI**

Erika Torri, Executive Director of the Athenaeum since 1991, has acted as a catalyst in the expansion of the library. Under her leadership, the Athenaeum has seen an increase in new members and membership income, and, in 1998, membership exceeded 2,000 for the first time. A native of Bremen, Germany, Torri received her Master's degree in Library Science at the Library School, Hamburg, interned at the Bibliotheque Nationale and at the Sorbonne, Paris, and served as Assistant Department Head at Harvard University's Countway Library. As a practicing artist, widely known for her miniature weavings, she has exhibited internationally, and her works are in museum and private collections.

HOW DO WE HELP SAN DIEGO MATURE AS A CULTURAL CAPITOL?

## *The Declaration of Cultural Organization Intent*

DR. JEFFREY W. KIRSCH

Executive Director, Reuben H. Fleet Science Center

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Those of you that know me, know I enjoy paraphrasing things. So don't be embarrassed if during this discourse you note some familiar names that you may not have thought of as linked to a discussion about museums or art. I am going to begin first with a declaration of intent so you know my point of view toward audience and community. Then I will get into the question at hand about audience development and offer four points that lead me to think about recommendations.

In San Diego we have a window of opportunity for arts organizations and cultural organizations to cooperate and work together. This is a unique time in our community. The leadership we have at the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture has really helped make discussions of cultural development possible and meaningful.

But to paraphrase Woody Allen, more than any other time in history, our arts and culture institutions are at a crossroads. One path leads to despair and utter hopelessness, and the other to total extinction. Let us pray we have the wisdom to choose correctly.

In that context, here is my declaration of intent:

When, in the course of its development, an association of cultural organizations expands its role in its community, and assumes a more prominent position among the cultural capitols of the earth, a decent respect for the opinions of humankind requires that it should declare the causes which impel it to its new position. We hold these truths to be self evident, that all people are created equal, that they are endowed with certain inalienable rights, and that among them are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness and access to the wonders of our civilization in the arts, sciences and humanities. Thus to secure this last right, public institutions are established among men and women, by those concerned citizens who derive their purpose from the community's quest for lifelong learning. The trustees of the association, having specific interest and responsibilities in the arenas of the sciences, engineering, the visual and performing arts, and the care and

conservation of the earth's animal and plant species, have incorporated according to such principals, and organized themselves in such a form as to them seem most likely to positively affect the cultural quality of life in San Diego. These same trustees have agreed by unanimous consent to present to the people programs and exhibitions of, by, and for the use of the community's citizens and their visitors. These programs and exhibitions may be in the form of tangible exhibits or intangible media presentations and experiences. Their purposes are to inspire, educate and entertain the citizenry, and by so doing contribute to the general prosperity of the commonwealth and ensure its future development.

That's my personal declaration of intent for you. You and I - we are the cultural trustees for the city and region of San Diego. Now, how do we help San Diego become that cultural capitol we desire it to be? Arts and cultural audience development - what is our problem, what is our solution? What is the problem? I suggest four points that bear on this question.

1. The San Diego Cultural Marketing Initiative has already given us some audience statistics and will give us more. But I suspect that those of us who take our own surveys and take the numbers and study them will all come to the same conclusion: arts and cultural activities do not appeal to everybody. Speaking for organizations such as museums, at best we seem to appeal to about 15 percent of the adult public. But it is a magic 15 percent, because it is a number that seems to apply across every audience and reflects an essential correlation. Each of us appeals to about 15 percent of the public and the magic is that they share a cultural value - not social status, not race, not ethnicity, not economic class. Our audience and visitors all love and believe in life-long learning. This is what our audiences share. These are the elite in our culture - people who want to learn.

*Students and organized groups make up 20 to 25 percent of many of our audiences. Each child is a potential artist, scientist and art lover. Each child has the time, and via the school system should have the resources, to explore their potential in the arts, science and mathematics. It is in our own interest and in the community's interest that we cater to this need, encourage and nurture it.*

2. We had better not forget that we need to look closely at the relationship we have with schools. This is perhaps the most important target 'elite'. Students and organized groups make up 20 to 25 percent of many of our audiences. Each child is a potential artist, scientist and art lover. Each child has the time, and via the school system should have the resources, to explore their potential in the arts, science and mathematics. It is in our own interest and in the community's interest that we cater to this need, encourage and nurture it. Each child is a part of the biggest elite sector in this society. All children are our elite audience.

3. Decision-making. Who makes the decision in arts and culture participation? Women are the dominant arts and culture consumers. We must appeal to them.

4. We need to learn more about the impact of the e-world on our market. As Paul Simon has sung, "These are the days of miracles and wonders." Some consider these folks that are a part of the e-world to be computer geeks. And relatives and derivatives of couch potatoes, the so-called mouse potatoes. But I think the e-world is a very different phenomenon, because the Net is interactive. The on-line wired generation is and will be culturally different than the unwired and non-digital folks. And they will be the vast majority. Remember that every hour on the Internet is time away from your theater, museum and so on. Is time competition with the Net going to make us irrelevant? We see the competition factor every day. The changes we are going through are huge.

5. In my picture of the market we are elitist and will remain elitist in the best



*Bernoulli Ball Exhibit, Reuben H. Fleet Science Center, photo by Cece Canton*



sense of that word, based on education levels, and the new democratization of culture and access encouraged by the e-world - these things point me to look at a window of opportunity to make positive change. We will keep the quality level up. What if our 15 percent at the Fleet is not the same as the 15 percent at the Museum of Art or the Globe Theatres. Research has indicated that this is the case. Most people belong to one organization. My question is why does this have to be? These are all people who have sufficient resources to participate in more than one organization. So we can grow our audiences from within the community. I believe that if we go after these audiences together, our individual audiences will be bigger and better. Collaborate and share audiences.

We are the dreamers and collective storytellers for our culture. It remains our task to be sure there will be a new audience. We need to collaborate in the education of our youth. We must reach our students to grow the long-term audience for the arts. The Rosa Parks School project in Balboa Park is a good example of how we need to reach students. All of its classes are here: nine museums work together, in collaboration with the city school system and San Diego State University, and in collaboration with the Price Charities. This shows how important arts and culture organizations can be as educators.

Another revolution: we at Balboa Park have started meeting and collaborating to develop a new, collaborative master plan for cultural organization partner-

ship. And on a regionwide basis, a group of us are regularly meeting. What does this mean? In this last half-year, we have been working on joint proposals. We won a major grant from the California Department of Health. It is the collaboration and the interesting chemistry that can result in attracting the funding. If we say we are a cultural capitol, we ought to be able to collaborate with our colleagues. Not every project is destined for success. But when you look at ventures like San Diego Art + Sol, with 15 organizations coming together, this is an indication that things are happening and we have an internal momentum going. We need help from the Commission to more actively promote collaboration. And always, we need to focus our efforts on education.

#### **DR. JEFFREY W. KIRSCH**

Jeffrey W. Kirsch, Executive Director of the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center since 1983, received his B.S. (1962) in Aeronautical Engineering at Princeton University, his M.S. (1963) and his Ph.D. (1969) in Aeronautical Engineering at U.S.C. Kirsch previously worked as a research engineer in aerospace and then a science producer with public television. He has led or consulted on the production of a dozen IMAX films and helped establish the Fleet as a nationally known innovator in hands-on exhibits and informal science education. With the approval of the Fleet's Board of Trustees, Kirsch has been dedicating his energies to the development of a more collaborative relationship with other arts and cultural institutions in Balboa Park and the San Diego region.

HOW DO WE HELP SAN DIEGO MATURE AS A CULTURAL CAPITOL?

## *Growing by Serving the Community*

JUNG-HO PAK

Artistic Director, San Diego Symphony

The message of bringing the Orchestra to the community is something we have been focusing on for the past couple of years. The difficulty of San Diego is that anything that works in New York won't work here. It is a very difficult market. We have a lot to divert our attention.

That means that we as organizations have to grow up. We can't say just because we play Beethoven and Brahms that people should come and hear the Symphony. Because we give exciting performances, yes. But then there is another aspect: community service and being a part of the community. For too many organizations, art versus community service is like business versus philanthropy. Because, when you get down to it, we service schools and communities when a grant comes up, or when someone is underwriting it. We struggle - how do we make a difference in this community?

As I look at the Symphony post-bankruptcy, at what we could have done better, it is to be more a part of the community, to be so intrinsically connected to every other organization and to people's lives that if we were to ever be threatened - which we aren't - there would never be a question of our value.

Community involvement is our success. I fundamentally believe that San Diego has to be in love with its Symphony. And that is a critical long-term goal. It is easy to concentrate on what you need to do next week, for the next concert. It is hard to focus on community involvement. But community involvement is both selfish and spiritually fulfilling. The more people become intrigued with you the more they will come and attend. And it is just as important for us to get into the community - be it North County or East County - if we are to overcome the community fears of coming downtown.

You have to work carefully with community groups. You have to avoid tokenism. It is really easy to do guerrilla concerts. You know, you go in, play your concert and leave and say, "We'll see you in about three years when our next grant comes up." And so you have to do things that don't actually cost a lot of money, but that takes time. You have to go into the classroom and work with children - know faces and know names. That spells success.

It's about involvement. There is a disconnect among our young children. The arts in California and around the country have suffered because of lack of education. Dragging children to the concert hall to have them listen to an hour concert about Mozart is not enough. We have to take responsibility

or Fritz Reiner. You don't see that anymore. The general population is not familiar with classical music. In order to meet them halfway, you change the way you present it, you change your product. At the Pops we now have video. Our Light Bulb Series is kind of a variety show for the mind. Each concert

*The general population is not familiar with classical music. In order to meet them halfway, you change the way you present it, you change your product. At the Pops we now have video. Our Light Bulb Series is kind of a variety show for the mind. Each concert is a way to say that coming to the concert hall is not a scary thing. We put it in context of real life.*

as arts institutions and arts leaders, to be passionate and be advocates to get more arts in the classroom and squeeze out more time in the curriculum. We're not a Band-Aid. Children need day-to-day care and feeding in the arts. We have to talk to the people who make decisions concerning educational priorities, and we have to do it collectively.

In programming, there is a thin line between art and pandering. Between art and reaching your community. There are ways to meet your audience half way. Audiences have changed so much since 1950 when you used to be able to turn on the TV and see Toscanini

is a way to say that coming to the concert hall is not a scary thing. We put it in context of real life.

The orchestra is basically a 19th century vehicle. But that doesn't mean that it doesn't have benefit for children, for the general community. I don't think classical music is the be-all and end-all. I love it, but I know that you, like me, enjoy rock and roll, and jazz and world music.

Community involvement is about pricing your tickets so they are affordable. It is about information and investment. If you can provide your audience with

information about what you do, you open the door to new experiences. I give the pre-concert talks myself. It is a way that people feel connected to me. The more people know you, the more they will be connoisseurs of your art form.

Quality is another part of building community through the arts. Among the many reasons given here for improving our quality, there is another reason we should all be the best: so that we all make good partners. If you are the best at what you do, other groups will collaborate with you.

Part of quality is taking a stand and saying we need to support local artists, because they are in touch with our community. No one is ever a prophet in their own land, so we must try to turn that around and commission local artists.

We're in a business. Can we be happy at it? Can we serve our community and be successful at what we do too? Can we fulfill our soul and keep the books balanced at the same time? The answer is we must. And perhaps the most important part of making it all work is putting community first.



San Diego Symphony: photo by Ken Jacques

## JUNG-HO PAK

Since 1998, Jung-Ho Pak has served as the artistic director and principal conductor of the San Diego Symphony. Appointed in 1999 as music director of the New Haven Symphony Orchestra, Pak is the seventh conductor to hold this position in the orchestra's 107-year history. He has served as music director with two of the top music conservatories in the United States: the University of Southern California Symphony and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. He has also served as principal conductor of the Emmy-nominated Disney Young Musicians Symphony Orchestra for eight seasons. Pak's career has taken him to Asia, Europe and South America, and he has conducted several recordings. Pak is a frequent speaker on television and radio about the relevance of art in society and the importance of music in education.

HOW DO WE HELP SAN DIEGO MATURE AS A CULTURAL CAPITOL?

## The Culture of Community

ANDY LOWE

Producing Artistic Director,  
Asian American Repertory Theater

For the past five years I have served as artistic director for the Asian American Repertory Theater Company. And people always seem to have a feeling that we, through our work, are speaking to "a" community. That is a myth. Within the Asian American community there are Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, Filipino Americans - so many different experiences. How do you speak to all these people? How do you create a culture that doesn't exist? That is our big goal and obstacle - to speak to those many voices and to create that culture as we go. It is exciting to me to see things that were intrinsically me and part of my upbringing become mainstream and become real to other people.

When this works - having one culture become real to other people - it is amazing. I remember seeing a children's theater production of *Monkey*

*King* done by the Asian Story Theater. I remember watching little kids - African American, Caucasian, Hispanic and Asian - walking out together with the same shared responses after watching a show.

I had an opportunity to work with a master of Bilang, which is Balinese shadow puppet theater. In talking with him and learning the shadow puppet, it occurred to us that in Balinese there is no word for art, because it is so connected to their everyday life. And how is it that this culture, here in America, can exist separated from our lives? To change that, it is important to defy the

*There is theater that many people are afraid of because it is harder than watching MTV or Survivor. How do we build their comfort with it? Rather than trying to get the community to come to us, we must be out there with them. To create that community, create that voice. Doing so means that we as organizations cannot be afraid of different points of view, or of art and culture that is happening now.*

myth of what is high culture, low culture, pop culture. It is all just culture. It is something that we all carry with us.

There is theater that many people are afraid of because it is harder than watching MTV or *Survivor*. How do we build their comfort with it? Rather than trying to get the community to come to us, we must be out there with them. To create that community, create that voice. Doing so means that we as organizations cannot be afraid of different points of view, or of art and culture that is happening now. Eddie Vedder, the lead singer of Pearl Jam, said, "Why aspire to be the next Pearl Jam? Why aspire to be the next anything, when you can be the first you?" And that is something to do in trying to create a new culture - to be the first us.

Any art form that is going to grow and survive must grow with its community, with its audience. We need to create something new. That is something we all have to work harder to do.

Large portions of our audience are not theatergoers. Here's where early exposure and education using the arts is critical. The earlier the age that children see a play and leave wanting to be the Monkey King, the sooner they make this a part of their lives, and it becomes part of who they are. This - finding art that defines the community and speaks to the community - creates community. Once you find that audience, those people will be loyal, sharing that voice.

Collaboration is key for us all to succeed at this. We've put a lot of emphasis on finding those allies. And finding those other artistic voices. Partnerships are very important to this. For example, we can bring our audience to see other work and artists. For example, the San Diego Black Ensemble's audience can see our work, our point of view. Then you have that shared experience, that shared vision, that shared voice that we all seek.

Over the next 25 years, how we build that community and solidify San Diego as a cultural community is through that shared vision, that shared voice. I think that we need to remember that the role of any arts organization - any artist - is not necessarily to give a presentation of our own point of view or just our own experience, but to give something of ourselves that speaks to a human experience. Not necessarily the Asian American experience, the Chinese American experience, but the human experience.

Artists and arts and cultural organizations exist because the need for them exists. Whether it is the Symphony, Asian American Repertory Theater, playwrights like David Henry Hwang, or rock stars like Eddie Vedder, or filmmakers like George Lucas - these forces exist

because there is a need for them.  
The point is to not be afraid of them,  
but to work in mixing new and old -  
not being afraid to let your art evolve,  
while still giving reference to those  
past forces.

We just had a fantastic and absolutely  
fun and wonderful artistic experience.  
We closed a show called *F.O.B.* by  
David Henry Hwang, written in the  
1970s. In this show we were able to use  
classical Chinese shadow puppetry and  
classical Chinese martial arts in addition  
to having a backdrop of the 1970s, with  
references to *Saturday Night Fever* and  
disco music. And there was something  
so wonderful and involving about it:  
people came away with an experience  
- that element, that idea that is all-inclu-  
sive rather than all-exclusive.

That, in the end, is what building  
community and building our art is all  
about: being all-inclusive rather than  
all-exclusive.

#### ANDY LOWE

Andy Lowe is one of the co-founders of the  
San Diego Asian American Repertory Theater  
(AART) and has served as the company's  
Producing Artistic Director since 1997. Lowe has  
worked as a designer, actor, writer, director and  
producer with AART since its inception in 1995.  
As a performer, Lowe has appeared with the  
San Diego Black Ensemble Theater, Asian Story  
Theater (AST) and the CAT Tour, a multi-ethnic  
theatre education program, as well as on tele-  
vision's *NightMan*, and *The Tiger Woods Story*.  
Lowe has earned praise as a director for Sung  
Rno's *Cleveland Raining*, David Henry Hwang's  
*F.O.B.* and *Trying to Find Chinatown*. Lowe's  
play *The Cultural Hyphen* was produced as part  
of *Plays by Young Writers* at The Globe Theatres'  
Cassius Carter Centre Stage. He is currently  
writing for the Asian Americas Project, a  
collaborative new work for the AART and AST.



*F.O.B.*, Asian American Repertory Theater, photo by George Ye

HOW DO WE HELP SAN DIEGO MATURE AS A CULTURAL CAPITOL?

## Capitalizing Cultural Resources

JUDITH C. HARRIS

Chair, City of San Diego Commission  
for Arts and Culture

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I want to address a subject that I think is implied in capitalizing cultural resources, and that is diversity. Last evening, as we looked over the snapshots tracing the history and development of San Diego's cultural organizations, we saw a lot of white faces and a lot of white ladies with a lot of jewelry and furs. But that was the reality and that was the way San Diego's cultural institutions started. Then, thankfully, we were saved by many people along the way, including Martin Peterson, Craig Noel, and Kay Porter, who said, "Times have changed," and San Diego has embraced that change. We in the arts and cultural community now include people of all colors, faiths and gender descriptions.

Diversity is our strength and our weakness in this community. One of the areas that the Commission for Arts and Culture stresses in its application process is a reflection of the diversity that each group presents. We want to know there are people on staff who have a multi-cultural demographic. We want to know that boards reflect this diversity, that the audience and artists and curators reflect this diversity. It is important. We are in the year 2001. It doesn't fly any more to come to us and say we can't find people of color who can serve on our boards. I understand there is a disproportionate amount of wealth

in the white community; there is not a disproportionate amount of brains in other communities. We need to look at our boards and ask if they are all really living up to the requirements that they need to live up to. If not, would we be better off with someone who maybe couldn't come in with a big lead gift but who has enthusiasm and passion and a new vision, and is willing to do some work. I think we have to be a little ruthless on this.

We have lots of opportunity. Here are some ways to affect change:

- 1) Take your boards and divide them into City Council districts. Find out who comes from what district. Send someone who has made a donation, who has a profile, to your City Council person and say, I need a Latino for my board, can you suggest someone?
- 2) Go to other groups' fundraisers and special events. I guarantee that if you go to Junior Theater, you are going to



*Broaden your horizons. Don't stay with the same cliques. You've got to believe in your mission enough to change the way you live and change the way you act and go outside of your comfort zone. It is very important. Diversity is our future. We have an enormous influx of people from other countries in this state, and we need to bring them into the future of California.*

run into a lot of parents of color. Sit next to them. See what their interests are. See what interests they have in coming on board. This is intelligent cooperation.

3) At your own events, don't let all your head honchos sit at the head table. Tell them to work. Put them at tables with potential donors. We all need to challenge our board members to go out there and do the work. We have to do more.

4) Encourage your trustees to bring their children to your events, your productions and encourage them to buy extra tickets for their school friends. That's how we develop audiences. That's how we keep the audience from dying out. We have to bring young people in. This opens new doors.

These are practical suggestions, but they work. Broaden your horizons. Don't stay with the same cliques. You've got to believe in your mission enough to change the way you live and change the way you act and go outside of your comfort zone. It is very important. Diversity is our future. We have an enormous influx of people from

other countries in this state, and we need to bring them into the future of California.

Artists are very open-minded. Artists are not afraid of change. We embrace it. Let's do it on our own boards.

Watch the appointments in your community, watch who the Mayor is appointing. We now have one woman on the Port Commission. One woman? When we tried in our partnership - the City of San Diego represented by our Arts and Culture Commission, the Port Commission and the Convention Center - to come together to get a work of art that could go in front of the Convention Center, it was enormously challenging. To try and find a way to get these three boards together about one issue - public art. We had an abysmal failure. We then worked around, and came up with another solution, after about a year and a half. We thought we had a piece of art we could be proud of. The error I made was to think that people thought the way I did about this work - that it was not controversial. I went to the Port meeting, just to see how things would go. People got up out of the audience

and vilified the sculpture. They said things that were outrageous to me as a woman, an American, a human being. No one spoke out. So I got up and spoke from my heart. Do you know I needed a police escort to go to my car? On something as non-confrontational as the Niki de Saint Phalle piece. That's what we have to deal with in San Diego. The way to get around it is to be involved, and to educate the people who have power. Let them know that we count. So that we all say, "where are the women, where are the Hispanics, where are the Native Americans?"

Be political. Don't just fight the press. Use the press. Articles only happen because people are willing to be noisy and relentless. We need to say that we in arts and culture have a constituency out there and we matter, and we want to see something on the editorial page of our paper. You've got to be sure you have enough gumption, enough belief, to put it right down there. Be strong. Come together. Don't go off in factions. The more we can be organized, the more we can speak with one voice, the more clout we are going to have. But you have got to remember that you are the power, what you say is important. You've got to get your message out in a passionate, logical, united fashion.

The small arts groups in this community have a lot to add to our cultural life. They have strong beliefs. But they are desperate. A paycheck is very important. They can live or die by one month's production. We need to support them.

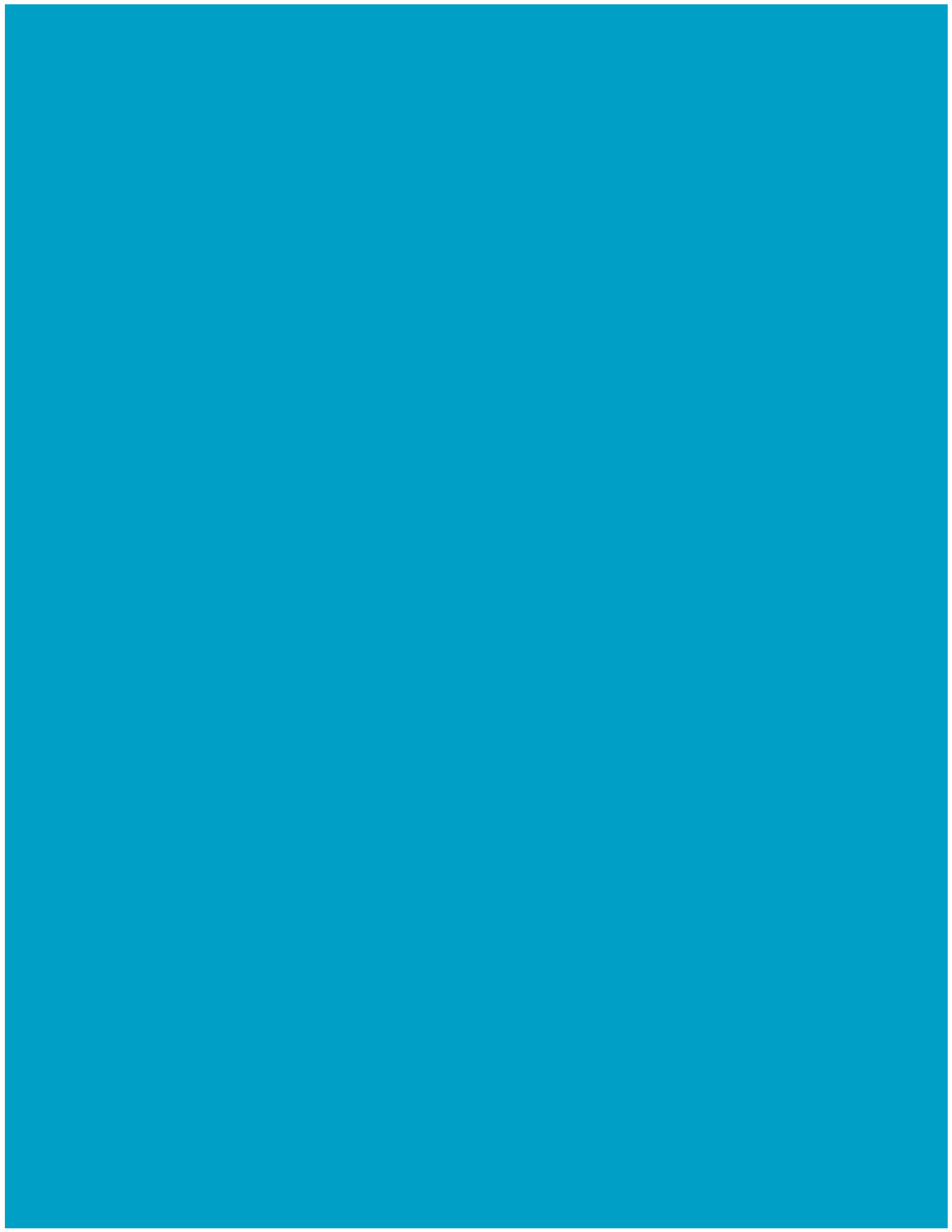
The large groups are important because they have visibility. They have clout and access. They should work together with the small groups. That kind of collaboration, cooperation: this is what will get money. Come together and go after it together.

#### JUDITH C. HARRIS

Chair of the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture, January 1999 to July 2001, Judith Harris has served on the boards of the Scripps Foundation for Medicine and Science and the La Jolla Playhouse. Harris currently serves on advisory boards to the Mingei International Museum of Folk Art, the Center for Community Solutions and the Selection Committee for the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego. Harris has co-chaired capital campaigns at Scripps Memorial Cardiac Center and at KPBS for the Copley Telecommunications Center. Harris was selected "Woman of the Year" in 1994 by KPBS, and "Woman of Dedication" by the Salvation Army in 1996. October 2, 2000, was declared "Judith Harris Day" by the Mayor and City Council in recognition of her contributions to the San Diego community.



*Fern Street Circus, photo by Bob Grieser*





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